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ITALY

President Leone opens a round of consultations today in the aftermath of Prime Minister Moro's resignation to decide whether to dissolve parliament and schedule an election.

Moro's Christian Democratic minority government resigned yesterday following a two-day parliamentary debate during which it became apparent that the government could not survive a confidence vote. President Leone has asked Moro to stay on in a caretaker status.

The constitution only requires Leone to consult the presidents of the Chamber and Senate before dissolving parliament. He is likely, however, to meet also with major party leaders in an effort to secure broad public support before taking the unusual step of dissolving parliament ahead of schedule. Early elections have been held only once in the postwar period—in 1972, when Leone dissolved the fifth legislature elected under the 1948 constitution.

In recent days, some Christian Democrats—fearing a sharp loss to the Communists in an election—have desperately tried to find a stopgap solution that would permit parliament to serve its full term, until May 1977. A final attempt cannot be ruled out, but prospects for success are practically nil.

If Leone dissolves parliament by next Thursday, the election could be held on June 20.



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LEBANON

The speaker of the Lebanese parliament, Kamal Asad, announced yesterday that the presidential election that had been scheduled for today will be delayed until May 8.

The speaker acted primarily at the insistence of Lebanese leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt, who has claimed that Syria is exerting unacceptable pressure on members of parliament to vote for Ilyas Sarkis. Jumblatt's preferred candidate, Raymond Edde, had lost ground in recent days.

Jumblatt's leftist alliance yesterday publicly endorsed Edde for the first time, praising his willingness to "reject external interference" in Lebanon. The endorsement was only "in principle," however, suggesting that Jumblatt, fearing that Edde cannot be elected, may be prepared to consider another candidate with similar views.

Jumblatt may now work to secure backing from the sizable proportion of uncommitted delegates for a compromise candidate sympathetic to his reform program, yet without close ties to Damascus. Failing this, he could conceivably accept Sarkis if Sarkis would declare his intention quickly to reduce the Syrian presence in Lebanon. Jumblatt and Sarkis reportedly held cordial private talks on Thursday.

The Lebanese Christians and the Syrians probably would reluctantly accept a compromise candidate. They have marshaled impressive support for Sarkis, but apparently are still not willing or able to force his election in the face of leftist threats to resume heavy fighting.

If Jumblatt refuses to compromise, it is likely that Christian resolves will again harden and that the security situation will quickly deteriorate. This probably would lead to a further increase in the Syrian military presence in Lebanon.

Damascus so far has not commented on the postponement of the election in Beirut. Any delay, however, constitutes a threat to Syria's effort to arrange a settlement, and thus an embarrassment to Syrian President Asad.



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ANGOLA

A bitter struggle for power is taking place within the leadership of the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola

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Crespo told US Ambassador Carlucci this week that Angolan President Neto does not seem to be in any immediate danger of being deposed. Neto's room for political maneuvering has been seriously restricted, however, by pressures from black radicals within the Popular Movement's military hierarchy, whose hand has been strengthened as a result of the Movement's military victory. Crespo emphasized that the power struggle is still going on, and would not predict the outcome.

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Factional strife within the Popular Movement, common since it was founded in 1956, has centered primarily on policy differences between the political and military wings over how best to drive the Portuguese from Angola. The dispute was given racial overtones by the fact that educated mulattos virtually monopolized the political hierarchy, while blacks predominated in the military structure. In the years before independence, the blacks remained in a clearly subordinate position because the level of the insurgency against the Portuguese was low.

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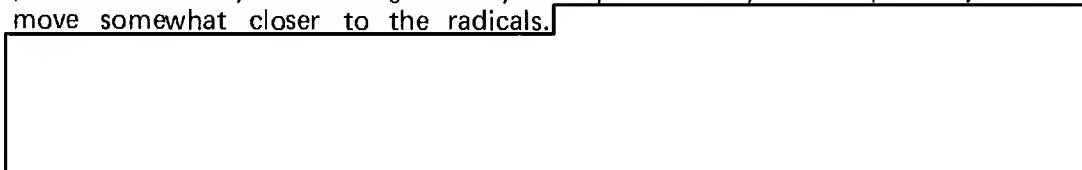
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These tensions have been exacerbated by the civil war and the Popular Movement's subsequent emergence as the sovereign political power in Angola. Since the war, differences have arisen over such issues as future policy regarding Namibia and South Africa, reconciliation toward defeated rival nationalist groups, the presence and role of the Cubans and Soviets, and relations with Portugal and the West.

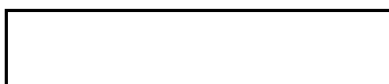


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Neto is an adroit politician who has weathered serious political crises in the past and who may well manage to stay on top. To do so, however, he may have to move somewhat closer to the radicals.



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YUGOSLAVIA

Preparations for the long-postponed European communist party conference have hit a new snag.

The latest signs of discord emerged on Wednesday, when East German party secretary Hermann Axen arrived in Belgrade to deliver a personal letter from Erich Honecker to President Tito. Axen met with Tito, Stane Dolanc, the party's number two man, and Aleksandar Grlickov, Belgrade's expert on interparty affairs.

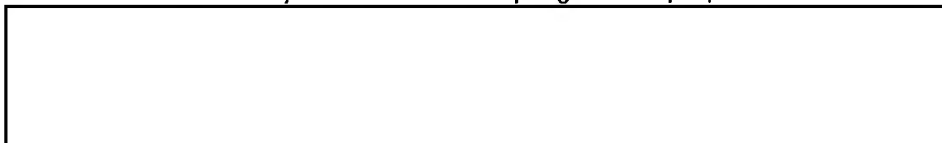
Immediately after the talks, Dolanc told a nationwide television audience that Belgrade will defer its decision on whether to participate in the conference until after the next meeting of the preparatory editorial commission, slated for May 4 to 6 in East Berlin.

Dolanc made his announcement on a program that included interviews with Spanish party chief Carrillo, the Italian party's Pajetta, and the French party's Plissonnier. These speakers emphasized the independence of their respective parties and criticized all those who believe in such "outdated concepts" as a single model for communists.

The press summary of Dolanc's speech left no doubt that he had endorsed the position taken by the French, Italian, and Spanish spokesmen. He probably also reaffirmed Yugoslav views on party independence.

Concerted activity of this sort is unprecedented on the eve of a multilateral party meeting. It follows closely on Romanian President Ceausescu's attack on the Soviet view of "proletarian internationalism" and sharpens the ideological differences and mutual suspicions dividing Moscow from the maverick parties.

Given the firm positions taken by these parties, next week's meeting of the editorial commission is not likely to make much progress in preparations for the conference.



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ARGENTINA

Argentine President Videla is attempting to curb right-wing vigilante activity. In a meeting with top army officers, he sought cooperation in ending the excesses of security officials, some of whom have killed left-wing subversives. Regional army commanders responded by cracking down on the extra-legal activities of police officers, over whom the army has jurisdiction.

Right-wing violence has become a major headache for the government. Videla and the junta want to avoid international criticism and accusations of being overly repressive. Videla also wants to assert his authority at a time when some critics have accused him of becoming indecisive.

By ordering an end to right-wing violence, Videla is directly challenging military colleagues who favor drastic measures against the left. They consider vigilante activities in retaliation against left-wing terrorism to be justified. Videla's failure to contain the right could invite other challenges to his authority.

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NORTH KOREA

Ranking Vice Premier Pak Song-chol was named at a routine session of the legislative assembly as replacement for ailing Premier Kim Il. The appointment probably does not signal any significant shift in North Korean policy.

Pak was the obvious candidate to move up. He is an able administrator and a well-traveled foreign affairs specialist who will enhance the regime's efforts to improve its image and acceptance abroad. Pak, a long-time associate of President Kim Il-song, is in his early 60s. He headed the North Korean delegation to the sessions of the North-South talks in 1972-73, before those discussions lapsed into empty propaganda exchanges.

Kim Il, who becomes the ranking vice president under Kim Il-song, has been in ill health for some time; two years ago he received medical treatment for eight months in Eastern Europe. He will now play more of a ceremonial than administrative role. Most of the regime's top leaders are colleagues of President Kim from his anti-Japanese guerrilla days. This latest shuffle underscores the need for new blood in the leadership.

During the past two years, the elder Kim has been discreetly grooming his son, Kim Chong-il, as his successor. The younger Kim already holds an important position in the party hierarchy, but the official media have not as yet mentioned the son as the designated successor or in any other capacity. The appointment of Pak Song-chol to the premiership, a government post, would not appear to affect the status of Kim's son.



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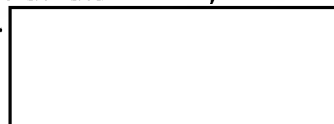
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THAILAND: The new coalition government led by Prime Minister Seni cleared its last parliamentary hurdle on April 30, winning a vote of confidence for its formal policy statement by 212 to 5 in the 279-seat Lower House. A last-minute effort to organize mass defections by members of Deputy Prime Minister Praman's Thai Nation Party and members of the two smallest coalition parties failed. The size of the coalition's vote of confidence should strengthen Seni's hand as he undertakes to demonstrate that his government can deal effectively with the country's basic problems, such as inflation, land reform, and law and order.



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